

## Asiatic Sand Sedge Withers Due to Rhode Island NWR's Joint Effort With Town Partner

Asiatic sand sedge, a nonnative, invasive plant, invades dunes and beaches reducing the quality of habitat for beach-nesting birds like piping plovers and least terns. It also decreases dune stability, making shorelines more vulnerable to storms and sea level rise. The Town of Middletown and the Rhode Island NWR Complex have combined efforts to destroy invading Asiatic sand sedge and replace it with native dune and beach grasses at Second Beach in Middletown and the adjacent Sachuest Point NWR. The partnership began in 2008 with a careful mapping of the infestations by Natural Resource Services, Inc. Several patches of the sedge covering a total of 1.84 acres were delineated. More than half an acre of it was located on Refuge property adjacent to an area where piping plovers nested in 2008.

Careful application of wetland-approved herbicide by All Island Landscape, a locally-owned business, over several seasons has reduced the coverage dramatically. Thus far, the coverage of the tenacious sedge has been reduced 62% with more slated for destruction. Crews will begin hydro-seeding cleared backdune areas this April with a mix of native grass seeds composed of Atlantic coastal panicgrass (*Panicum amarum*) and switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*). In 2012, American beachgrass (*Ammophila breviligulata*) will be planted to stabilize the foredunes.



Asiatic sand sedge at Second Beach in Middletown, Rhode Island before treatment. Photo taken by Leland Mello.



Following treatment, Asiatic sand sedge was greatly reduced. Hydro-seeding of native grasses will begin in April at Second Beach in Middletown, Rhode Island. Photo taken by Leland Mello.